

February 17

Take My yoke upon you...for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. Mat. 11:29,30

THOSE who wear this yoke have the assurances of the divine Word that all things are working together for good to them; that

R902 "Satan the prince of this world has placed many yokes upon the necks of all mankind. They are bound and fettered by every device which he could arrange. But Jesus invites all such to come to him and find rest--the blessed rest of freedom from the galling yoke of the oppressor."

R1961 "All in the world are under yokes of some kind--political yokes, social yokes, financial or business yokes, yokes of sin, of selfishness, of pride, etc., etc. The man who is under the political yoke finds it a very hard one. He is busy days and nights planning and scheming... concentrating every energy upon the risky business of seeking office, which, if he gain it, brings only a multitude of cares, and exposes him to a host of enemies of the opposing party who are often ready to blacken his character at the slightest provocation.

Those under the financial or business yokes are similarly oppressed. They labor long and hard; they scheme and plan and contrive and fret and worry to be rich, and in so doing they fall into a snare which robs them of the true happiness which riches cannot bring.

Those under the social yokes labor hard and sacrifice much in meeting the demands of society upon them. Few in the humbler walks of life know how galling is this yoke upon the rich, and particularly to those who are vieing with others in better circumstances. Women often wear themselves out in this unsatisfying service, while husbands and fathers are driven to despair and ruin trying to keep up with the financial drain. The yokes of pride, selfishness and sin of every kind are indeed hard yokes, and their burdens are heavy. To shake off all yokes and free ourselves from all burdens is impossible in this evil day. The prince of this world, Satan, has already imposed upon all the yoke of sin. And there is none able to deliver us from this yoke and its binding fetters but Christ, who, in his own good time and way, will do it for all who come unto him by faith and repentance.

While it is the purpose of Christ ultimately to set all such free from every yoke and to release them from every burden, he sees that they are not able yet to exercise and enjoy the glorious liberty of sons of God; and so by way of discipline and training, he purposes to bring them to that condition...

Precious moments, rich in blessing,
At the throne of grace I spend;
All my joys and griefs expressing,
To my best and truest Friend.
Here I find that sweet communion
With my Father and my Lord,
Earnest of that blessed union
Promised in the Holy Word.

MY YOKE IS EASY

HG2-380-381 "When we think of the load which our Lord carried -- bearing the sins of the whole world, suffering the just for the

the heavier the burden that may be attached, the greater will be the blessing and the reward by and by; the more severe the experiences during the present time, the brighter shall be the glory, and the brighter shall be their character, and the more sure shall they

In tender sympathy for all the oppressed and sorrowing he says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you," etc. Thousands have responded to the kind invitation, and they testify in no uncertain terms to the ease of Christ's yoke and the blessedness of his promised rest. And yet the rest is not of general temporal prosperity and freedom from care and toil and from all restraint."

LEARN OF ME

(Mat 11:28-29 KJV) "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*"

R2625 "We cannot suppose that physical weariness and physical burdens was the thought before our Lord's mind, but rather the heart-burden and sin-weariness, which all true Israelites must have felt, if they were honest with themselves."

R1789 "*Take my yoke upon you and learn of me.*" Matt. 11:29 ...learning of him, not only in an intellectual way, but also through the medium of the heart. Not until we have taken the Lord into our daily life as our living, personal companion and confidential friend and counselor and comforter and guide, as well as our Redeemer and Lord, can we fully learn of him those precious lessons which give to his disciples a joy which the world can neither give nor take away."

R2625 "If we are meek, teachable, humble-minded, ready to know and to do the Lord's will at any cost, then indeed we shall find rest to our soul's satisfaction -- the peace of God which passeth all understanding will rule in our hearts."

R2268 "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.*"

The rest and peace which the Lord gives are not entirely, nor sometimes at all, physical rest and earthly peace. This, he himself declares, saying, "My peace I give unto you, *not as the world giveth.*" The peace which our Lord gives is a rest of heart, a trust, a confidence -- based not upon things

[Hymn 241]

PRECIOUS MOMENTS

Christ says, Come, thou heavy laden,
I will give thee sweetest rest;
All the way my feet have trodden;
Come to me when sore oppress.
Take my easy yoke upon you,
Rest from earthly care and strife,
I will sweetest comfort give you,
Walk with me the ways of life.

unjust that he might bring us to God—it seems strange that he could and did say truthfully of it that it was a light burden. To us it seems like the most severe burden

be of being fitted and polished for the heavenly Kingdom. From this standpoint every burden is light, because our yoke is appreciated, and is so easy, so reasonable: and additionally it is so light because the Lord is with us in this yoke. Z.00-137R2625:5

that are seen, which are temporal, transitory, unreliable, but based upon things that are not seen, the eternal things which can be grasped only with the arms of faith and seen only with the eye of faith; but here is rest and here is peace, such as the poor troubled world knows not of, and cannot understand."

R4279 "More and more as "New Creatures" we are learning to appreciate the barrenness of worldly hopes and ambitions and knowledge. And more and more we should be giving heed to the leadings of the "Good Shepherd," who is guiding his flock of "New Creatures" for their spiritual refreshment through the labyrinth of the "present evil world." Those sheep which keep nearest to the Shepherd secure the fattest and richest experiences and refreshments. On the contrary, the sheep which stray looking for pastures green on their own account, or following the voice of false shepherds, are the ones that are likely to become hungry and eat of the poisonous growths and fall into the pitfalls of sin and be devoured by the ravenous beasts of passion and worldliness. Happy is the sheep who learns to know the voice of the true Shepherd, and whose faith is such that he follows closely and not afar off!...

One of the important lessons for every sheep to learn is need of the Shepherd's care and guidance through the labyrinth of life. "Who is sufficient for these things," writes the Apostle. Then he declares, "Our sufficiency is of God" -- in Christ."

R2648 "Whosoever keepeth his word [loves the word of God, and takes pleasure not in turning, twisting and endeavoring to avoid the force of that Word, but who keepeth or cherisheth it, loveth it, and seeketh to conform thereto] in him verily is the love of God perfected."--1 John 2:5."

R2129 "Only a few thus apply their hearts unto instruction and wholly follow the divine direction. Consequently, only a few know the blessedness of the realization of the Lord's tender care. But to those who follow this leading there is a growing sense of his love which the daily walk with him deepens, confirms and sweetens as the years go by, and as experience makes plain the guidance of his loving hand."

Lord, we praise thee for this blessing,
For this privilege so sweet,
For thy tender love's caressing,
For this sure and safe retreat.
Never weary of our coming,
Never spurning our request;
With complaint or with rejoicing,
Still thy love is manifest.

imaginable... We are indeed interested in knowing what kind of a yoke his was which enabled him to draw this great load so cheerfully, so willingly, that he did say, "I

delight to do thy will, O my God."... We can indeed imagine ourselves, always used to a yoke of sin, taking another yoke and finding it easier. But how about the dear Master, who in all the previous time had been free from any restraint, without a yoke of any kind, simply, joyfully recognizing the Father and responding to his will, but never being yoked to any burden, to any obligation, to the accomplishment of any difficulty involving trial, suffering, pain, endurance?

"MY YOKE IS EASY"...

The Master's yoke, by which he was able to endure all of his trying experiences and to count them but a light burden, was his hearty, glad submission to the Heavenly Father's will. This willingness on our Lord's part, this full confidence in the Father, this full trust in the divine plan that it would work out a blessing for him and for the race which he wished to redeem — all this led to the full submission of his will in everything to the Father's will... "I delight to do thy will, O my god; thy Law is written in my heart."

Now, then, applying this matter to ourselves, who have come to Jesus, who desire to experience more and more of his rest and his peace—applying this to the Lord's faithful ones who have felt the heavy load of sin and have labored hard to strive against the slavery to sin, we see that the Lord's proposition is that he is willing to transfer such faithful ones, so that henceforth like himself they may have a joy in the burdens and trials and difficulties of life which they could not experience except by becoming his disciples and yoke-fellows."

R1961 "Few would say in viewing the Apostle Paul's experience that the yoke of Christ on his shoulders was an easy yoke, or that the burden of Christ's work which he bore was a light one. But evidently he thought so, for he counted it an inestimable privilege to endure hardness as a good soldier for Christ's sake. He joyfully suffered

the loss of all things and counted them but dross, that he might win Christ and be found in him. He rejoiced to be made a partaker of his sufferings that he might also be made a partaker with him of his glory, and share with him in the blessed work of his Kingdom.

Blessed work! Paul gloried in the prospect of such a future mission, and was in haste to manifest his readiness of mind for it, by zealously and most energetically devoting his life here to the Lord's service along the lines indicated in the divine plan. He took Christ's yoke upon him: he did not attempt to guide himself, but humbly placed himself under subjection to Christ, and obediently followed his guidance whithersoever it led him—whether to prison and the stocks, to an ignominious public beating or stoning that left him almost dead, to shipwreck, to perils on land and sea, among heathen enemies or false brethren, to wearing labor, and painful toil, or what not? And yet Paul counted this burden of Christ a light one, and his yoke an easy yoke. He spoke of his trials as light afflictions, and said he rejoiced in tribulations; and with lacerated backs and feet fast in the stocks in the depths of a miserable dungeon Paul and Silas rejoiced and sang praises to God.

Stephen had the same rest and joy even while his enemies were stoning him to death; and thousands more of God's saints can testify to the same thing—in the midst of poverty, sickness, affliction, temptation, and enemies on every hand, and even in the flames of violent persecution. Whence comes it? or how are rest and even joy compatible with such conditions? The answer is: it is a rest of mind—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." None can know the blessedness of this rest until they have experienced it. And none can realize its great value until they have been put to the tests of affliction.

The Lord gives the key to this rest in the words—"and learn of me; for I am meek

and lowly of heart." Truly, in a meek and quiet spirit is the secret of rest. To be meek is to cultivate the graces of patience; of loving submission to the will of God; of abiding confidence in his love and care and in the wisdom of his guiding counsel and overruling providences; and to perseveringly pursue this course through evil and through good report, or through favorable or unfavorable circumstances.

Let the beloved children of God seek more and more to copy Christ's meek and quiet spirit, accepting the providences of God and obeying his precepts and leading as he did, armed with the strength which he alone can supply, and will, to all those who take his yoke upon them, and learn of him."

R5886 "Our Lord declares that He has a yoke that is easy, comfortable and enjoyable. His yoke is, so to speak, an elastic yoke. It meets the varied conditions of the different individuals who wear it... The Lord is able to bear for us all that we lack ability to bear. There is no yoke which will enable one to bear burdens as this yoke does.. Thus the weakest are provided for, and the strongest get what they need. Here is the great opportunity of the Gospel Age.

Our Lord Jesus gave to the Apostle Paul the assurance, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9.) All things shall work together for good to us because we love Him, because we have taken His yoke, have become yoke-fellows with Him. We rejoice in the privilege of suffering with Him. The flesh may suffer, but the spirit rejoices... If we have the right spirit we shall be glad to do all that we can accomplish. One who would not be willing to do all in his power would not be accounted by the Lord as faithful. The Master's burden is light if it be accepted in sincerity and in truth, and only those who so receive it can become yoke-fellows with Him."

R2623 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

KNOWLEDGE INCREASES RESPONSIBILITIES

--MATT. 11:20-30.--MAY 6.--

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

OUR LORD would seem to have been somewhat disappointed at the result of his ministry, especially in Capernaum, where he had resided a considerable time, and our lesson opens with a warning to the people of Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida, that having been favored with many mighty works and many evidences of Jesus' Messiahship, and that the Kingdom was being offered to them, etc., they would be held correspondingly responsible. As Capernaum had been greatly blessed, highly exalted, or, figuratively, "exalted up to heaven" in its privileges and opportunities, the result to it would be greater degradation, and eventually it would be brought low into the dust—destroyed, "brought down to hell," in the text, signifying brought down to hades, the death-state. And surely this was fulfilled in the trouble which came upon the Jews, and which destroyed their nationality, as a result of their having failed to accept the Messiah and the Kingdom which he offered to establish.

But though our Lord was disappointed that he was so generally rejected, he cannot have expected that he would be widely welcomed by the people. He must have known, as he elsewhere describes to his disciples, quoting from the prophecies, that he would be rejected by Israel, and that the Kingdom offer would pass by them. As a matter of fact his rejection on their part incidentally permitted the sending of the gracious call to the Kingdom honors to believers among the Gentiles, and thus we are favored at the present time.

The contrast which the Master draws between Bethsaida and Chorazin and Tyre and Sidon is a strong one. The latter two were

flourishing Gentile cities, yet, as was common in such, very full of wickedness and immorality, so that evidently their names were synonymous for that which was unholy, licentious, unclean. So then, for our Lord to say that if his mighty works had been done in those unholy cities they would have repented long ago in sack-cloth and ashes, that is, with deep contrition, was to say that the people of Bethsaida and Chorazin were in very much worse condition of heart than those Gentiles: further from such a condition as God could bless.

From this we may gather that God takes a different standpoint of viewing such matters from that taken by the majority of people. He does not merely say, Is this a moral or an immoral city? Are these people decent or indecent? The question which the Lord would examine rather would be, What is the heart attitude of this people or that people, this individual or that individual? What is he aiming, striving, for? --how would he be effected thereby if granted clearer light respecting the divine will? Hence, if we look at ourselves, and find that we are not immoral, not coarse, sensual, brutish, but more refined than many others, this is well; it is what we should be in view of our favors, privileges and mercies; but we are to remember that we might still be very far short of what would be pleasing to the Lord, and that if God should favor us with certain privileges and blessings and opportunities, and we were to reject them, our attitude in his sight might be worse than that of the immoral.

Turning to Capernaum, most favored of all, our Lord contrasts her with Sodom, whose wickedness was very great, so that it

brought upon her a fierce destruction from the Lord. Capernaum is clearly told that from the Lord's standpoint of view her people were more wicked, less worthy of divine favor, more worthy of punishment, than the people of Sodom. This was a severe arraignment, and yet, we can see, a just one, for the poor Sodomites, walking in the way of sin, ignorance of God, etc., gradually went down and down, according to the course of fallen nature, while the people of Capernaum had much advantage every way as Jews, whom the Lord had blessed with a knowledge of himself, and to whom now, finally, he had sent Messiah, and whose miracles they had seen repeatedly, and with whose beautiful character and teaching they had been brought much in contact through his considerable residence in their midst.

In view of these privileges and mercies, their rejection of Messiah and failure to grasp their opportunities branded them, so to speak, as being inferior to the Sodomites, in appreciation of righteousness and truth; for our Lord declares that the Sodomites would not have met the end they did had they had similar privileges and mercies bestowed upon them.

The question naturally arises, Why did not our Lord grant the Sodomites as good an opportunity as he granted the people of Capernaum, and why did he not grant the people of Tyre and Sidon, who were still living, as favorable an opportunity as he granted to the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida? We answer, that none of these people were granted a trial for eternal life. The Sodomites did not have such a trial; the people of Tyre and Sidon had no trial of any kind; nor did the people of Palestine have a trial for life eternal. The trial which they did have was a trial respecting their love for the Lord and for righteousness, and of their readiness to be his people and supporters of his Kingdom. The result of the trial showed that they were not sufficiently in love with righteousness to appreciate the Lord's Kingdom, nor to become its friends and servants; and in consequence of this their city and their land, and they as a people were rejected by the Lord from being his agencies in connection with the establishment of his Kingdom.

That no individual trial for eternal life had yet come to any of these people is evident from several facts: (1) that the whole world was under condemnation through Adam's transgression; (2) that no one could be relieved from that condemnation, so as to have a fresh individual trial for life, until the ransom price was paid, and it was not yet finished; (3) this is further implied by our Lord's statement (*verse 24*) that there would be a day of judgment future--a day of testing, a day of trial, a day to see who would be worthy of eternal life and who unworthy. (Acts 17:31.) In that judgment day, the Millennial age, all are to have a chance for everlasting life; for the granting of this very chance to all of Adam's race was the very object of our Redeemer's death. Meantime, the people of Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum, having rejected the Lord and having been rejected by him, he nevertheless found some there, and has been selecting others since, of a special class, which he is calling to joint-heirship with himself in that Millennial Kingdom, under whose beneficent reign of righteousness a full and impartial judgment or trial for life shall be granted to all. He would have his hearers understand, however, that in that future trial time the people of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom would be treated with more consideration and allowance than those who, having many more privileges, had hardened their hearts against what they did see and know. "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee," Capernaum.

How scathing was the rebuke of these words, that the people of Sodom, notorious for their wickedness, licentiousness, etc., should find more favor, more tolerance, at the Lord's hand, when he should begin the work of judging mankind, than themselves, who had been God's favored people, but who had not appreciated his favors, and had done despite unto his goodness! But if any infer from this that the people of Capernaum, when they shall be on trial for life during the Millennial age, will be unkindly treated, it would be a great mistake; because the declaration of the Lord's Word distinctly is that the world shall be "judged in righteousness"--not in wrath, malice, not with a desire to do them injury, but with a desire to do them every good possible--hence it will be "tolerable" for the people of Capernaum in that day--very tolerable--it will be a grand and blessed opportunity for them to come to a full, clear knowledge of the Lord; but it will be still more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sins, although greater in some respects, were less heinous in the sight of God--they were less against character, more sins of ignorance.

We may assume, therefore, that during the Millennial age disciplines such people as those of Tyre and Sidon and those of Sodom, who had never known God to any degree, who had never known his laws, will be in a condition of heart much more readily amenable to the influences and requirements of that time than will be some others--the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, who having known more respecting God had misused the opportunities of the present life--who broke down their characters instead of building them.

And these are merely ensamples, for we know that all those that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth--"they that have done good [the saints, the overcomers] unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil [all mankind outside of the saints] unto the resurrection of judgment."--John 5:28,29.

We can readily see, in harmony with our Lord's declaration in this lesson, that many who in the present life have no knowledge and no opportunity may be nothing disadvantaged thereby in that judgment time, but on the contrary may be more susceptible to the good influences of the Kingdom and its laws than some others will be who have had contact with the light to some extent in the present life, but who have refused it. What a blessed promise is this one, of a future judgment or trial! How much it means to the whole groaning creation, that God, who let the sentence of Adam fall on all without giving them an individual trial, has provided a redemption for all from that first sentence, and has provided that each member of the race shall individually have a trial, a judgment, in due time, at the hands of him who died for all. And then, how favorable the conditions are to be, under which that trial will be granted! Satan is to be bound, and the earth is to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and his goodness and his gracious arrangements on behalf of his fallen creatures, whom he desires shall not perish, but, if they will, have eternal life through Christ.

However, as our Lord distinctly intimates (*v. 5*), these things respecting the coming judgment and the blessed opportunities which shall be accorded to every member of Adam's race, are hidden from the majority--especially do they seem to be hidden from the worldly-wise and prudent, who instead of accepting so gracious a plan, are rather inclined to teach the people that the poor Sodomites went to eternal torment without ever having had a chance, and with no prospect of ever having a chance in the future, although our Lord declares that if they had had as good an opportunity as the people of Capernaum they would have repented with a deep contrition. The wise and prudent are inclined to tell us also that the people of Tyre and Sidon, although not favored with our Lord's blessing, are also to be considered doomed to eternal torment, though they would have repented had they had as good an opportunity as the people of Palestine; and finally they tell us that these people of Palestine, having rejected our Lord, must necessarily be sufferers of eternal torment, and not merely losers of the Kingdom. They fail to see; they are blind to the truth--blinded by the traditions of their religious teachers--as the Jews were.

Then, to add to their confusion, they begin to attempt to apply the Lord's words respecting a day of judgment, and of course interpret it to mean a day of damnation, instead of a day of trial. They fail to note that their claim is that the Sodomites were already in hell, suffering torments of the severest form for nearly two thousand years, at the time our Lord uttered these words. Do they think that the Sodomites could suffer any more after the day of judgment than they describe them as suffering now? What do they understand by the words "day of judgment," anyway? Evidently they have no proper conception of the meaning of the words. They see that our Lord referred it to a future time, and they are hopelessly confused and thoroughly unable to give any reasonable explanation of the matter, either in harmony with God's character or in harmony with their own wretched and God-dishonoring theories.--See DAWN, Vol. I, p.137.

How comforting are our Lord's words, that these things are revealed, nevertheless, to some--to babes, to those who are not great, not wise, according to the course of this world; to those who are of humble mind, ready to be taught of the Lord, instead of wishing to teach the Lord. This great blessing, dearly beloved, is ours, and let us be very careful that we maintain the attitude of childlikeness and simplicity, that we may continue to be taught of God, and to "know the things that are freely given unto us of God." Let us rejoice in them and use them, and let the light shine out to others. The expla-

nation of the fact that the divine plan is hidden from the great majority of the learned, the doctors of divinity, etc., is that so it has pleased the Father to let "the wise be taken in their own craftiness," and to reveal his purposes to those of a humble mind. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." (1 Cor. 3:19.) The Father drew to the Son at the first advent, not the doctors of the law, the scribes and the notables, but certain "Israelites indeed," in whom was no guile, though they were but an humble few. And the same class has received the blessing all down the age.

The Master realized that his special instructions must be toward those whom the Father had given unto him, rather than toward the unready and unwilling ones who would not receive his testimony because not in a proper condition of heart to appreciate. To his faithful disciples, therefore, and to all of the same class since, he declared that all things he possessed he had received of the Father; he claimed nothing of himself; and further, he asserted that no one knew him truly, fully, intimately, but the Father, and that no man knew the Father except himself, the Son, and he to whom the Son revealed him. The average reader gets very little meaning out of this passage at first. The Christian who has been making progress for years, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, can appreciate it much better. He realizes that while he had some knowledge about Jesus and about the Father at first, from the very inception of his Christian experience, yet it was a different matter to come to know the Father and to know the Son in the intimate sense, in the sense of becoming well acquainted with them, knowing their mind as one knows the mind, the heart, of an intimate friend. It is a privilege to receive such an acquaintance. It is not to be had by everybody; it requires seeking for and knocking for, and such seeking and knocking implies an earnest desire to have an intimate fellowship and communion. Such a growth in grace should be earnestly sought by all of the Lord's true followers who seek to be his joint heirs in the Kingdom; for without it they cannot make progress. In proportion as we know the Father and know the Son we will love them and seek more and more to do those things which are pleasing in their sight.

COME! WEARY AND HEAVY-LADEN.

Still addressing the same class, and implying that there were some present of the right disposition who had not yet become his disciples, our Lord appealed to his hearers individually, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The difficulty with most of the people would seem to have been that they were neither weary nor heavy laden, but on the contrary pretty well self-contented. We cannot suppose that physical weariness and physical burdens was the thought before our Lord's mind, but rather the heart-burden and sin-weariness, which all true Israelites must have felt, if they were honest with themselves.

We are to remember that they were under the Law Covenant, that its requirements were very exacting, and that it made no allowance for weaknesses, imperfections, errors, etc.; consequently, all of those Jews should have felt themselves continually condemned in striving to carry the burden of the Law of Sinai. Not that the law was an unjust one or impossible to be kept by a perfect man, but because all being imperfect and fallen they were unable to keep the Law Covenant. So we may suppose that amongst the Jews at that time, while the majority were professing to be holy, law-keepers, who did no sin, there were some who honestly admitted to themselves and to others that they did not, could not, keep the Law perfectly, and who therefore felt burdened and wearied with their fruitless endeavors. Such felt their need of a burden-bearer, such felt their soul-sickness and need of the good Physician, and to such Jesus addressed himself, inviting them to come to him and receive rest, relief.

This coming to Christ for rest is the first step toward a Christian life; it is justification, the acceptance of him as the satisfaction for our sins; and from the time we thus accept him, as the Apostle declares, we have joy and peace through believing. (Rom. 5:1; 15:13.) But having been thus received and blessed, there is something more for us to do, viz., to learn that there is another burden and another yoke which we should take upon us voluntarily.

A yoke is a symbol of servitude, and so our Lord implies that those who are set free (either from the yoke of the Law Covenant, as were the believing Jews, or from the yoke of Satan, as were the believing Gentiles) should become his servants, should take his yoke,

should learn to do his will. A yoke generally is arranged for two, and our Lord speaks of it as his yoke, by which we are to understand that he also is a servant; having come to do the Father's will, and having put on the yoke of servitude, he invites us to become true yoke-fellows with himself in the doing of the Father's will, co-laborers together with Christ in the great work of the world's deliverance from sin and death.

The secret of the ability to wear this yoke, and to have companionship with Christ in his service, and to have as a result a great blessing in our own hearts, a rest unto our souls, lies, he explains, in our learning to be meek and lowly of heart as he was. It will be impossible for those who are proud, haughty, self-willed, ambitious, worldly-wise, etc., to labor in the same yoke with Jesus, or to find the true rest of soul which we properly seek. But if we are meek, teachable, humble-minded, ready to know and to do the Lord's will at any cost, then indeed we shall find rest to our soul's satisfaction--the peace of God which passeth all understanding will rule in our hearts.

We notice a difference between the two rests of vs. 28 and 29. Of the first it is said that the Lord will give it to him who comes to him in faith; of the second, it is said that he finds this rest to his soul through becoming a yoke-fellow with Jesus. And so it is: there are two blessings; the first blessing is that of justification--the joy of having our sins forgiven, realizing ourselves no longer strangers and foreigners from our heavenly Father, but brought nigh by the blood of Christ; the second is the joy which comes more gradually, a fruit-
age, a grace, a development in the heart, the growing and abiding peace and joy of the holy spirit. This second blessing, however, is attained by very few; the majority of nominal Christians know nothing of it; and yet it is the very object of the calling of this Gospel age, and those who fail to come to the Lord and to take his yoke, and to learn of him, to become thus "copies of God's dear Son," will fail utterly of the special purpose and call of this Gospel age, and will have neither part nor lot in the Kingdom. The blessing of justification by faith is merely to fit and prepare us to take the yoke and to become a co-laborer with the Lord in the Father's service.

This yoke which Jesus invites us to come under with him is a very formidable affair from the standpoint of the world: to them it seems to be a most unreasonable yoke, a most terrible burden--to consecrate life, time, means, everything to the service of God; but from the standpoint of those who have come unto Jesus, and to whom he has spoken peace and rest through justification, the matter is very different. To such it must seem a "reasonable service," that since the Lord has graciously redeemed our lives and our all, we should use what remains of that life to his praise and glory; and after we have fastened the yoke upon ourselves we find that it is an easy one, and that with it any burden, any duty, any trial, any difficulty, any vexation of spirit, any burden of any kind that could come to us, would be light indeed, because of this yoke.

Why? Because ⁽¹⁾those who wear this yoke have the assurances of the divine Word, that all things are working together for good to them; that the heavier the burden that may be attached the greater will be the blessing and the reward by and by; the more severe the experiences during the present time, the brighter shall be the glory, and the brighter shall be their character and the more sure shall they be of being fitted and polished for the heavenly Kingdom. From this standpoint every burden is light, because our yoke is appreciated, and is so easy, so reasonable; and additionally it is so light because the Lord is with us in this yoke. He is the great Burden-bearer, and will not suffer us to be tempted nor to be pressed with more of the burdens of life than we should probably be able to endure. He is watching out for the interests of all those who take his yoke upon them. Their burdens are his burdens, their trials are his trials, their interests are his interests; yea, all things shall work for good to them because they love him.

Let us remember, however, that the Lord takes no slaves in this way; he does not fasten the yoke upon any; he merely invites us to come, and then to fasten his yoke upon ourselves, to make a full consecration of ourselves to him and to his service.

⁽¹⁾ Feb. 17 Manna, Mat. 11:29-30